

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 NSCE-00

PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 SAJ-01 NIC-01 EUR-25

SAM-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /109 W

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R 230900Z JUL 74

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2132

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1242

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: CHOU'S ILLNESS AND THE ANTI-LIN ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. IN PEKING, THERE IS A DISTINCT FEELING THAT THE ANTI-LIN ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN IS CURRENTLY MAKING MINIMAL HEADWAY OR POSSIBLY ONLY MARKING TIME. THE POSTER CAMPAIGN HERE HAS BEEN SUBDUED FOR THREE WEEKS, THE OUTPUT OF PEKING RADIO AND PEOPLE'S DAILY ON THE CAMPAIGN SEEMS INCREASINGLY STEREOTYPED, AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR PRONOUNCEMENTS ON IT SINCE THE AMBIVALENT BUT PARTY-CONTROL ORIENTED JULY 1 EDITORIAL. THE RECENT BIG CHARACTER POSTER PUT UP FOR DISPLAY BY THE GROUP THAT STARTED THIS ROUND IN PEKING WAS DEFENSIVE IN TONE AND APPEARED TO HAVE DIFFICULTY FINDING THE CORRECT LINE BETWEEN CRITICISM OF THE PEKING MUNICIPAL LEADERS AND ACCEPTING THEIR LEADERSHIP. (PEKING 1237).

2. THIS LULL IN THE CAMPAIGN CONCEIVABLY COULD BE CLOSELY TIED TO CHOU'S ILLNESS DURING JUNE, WHICH MAY HAVE BECOME ACUTE TOWARD THE END OF THE MONTH (SEE BELOW). THE LEADERSHIP NOW  
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MAY BE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN MANEUVERING OVER THE

DIVISION OF CHOU'S AUTHORITY AND ENORMOUS WORK LOAD. PERHAPS BECAUSE TENG HSIAO-P'PING'S RIVALS AT THE CENTER HAVE NOT BEEN WILLING TO ALLOW HIM TO SIMPLY STEP INTO CHOU'S SHOES WITHOUT AN ARGUMENT, EVEN FOR A SHORT PERIOD, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE TENG'S REHABILITATION IS TOO RECENT FOR HIM TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN CHANNELS OF AUTHORITY, HE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE FULL CONTROL.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT CHOU EN-LAI'S ABSENCE HAS CREATED A REAL GAP, WE RECALL THE INFORMATION DERIVED FROM AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR FITZGERALD IN LATE JUNE THAT CHOU WAS AROUND THAT TIME WORKING A FULL DAY ON INTERNAL MATTERS (PEKING 1111). FITZGERALD HAS SINCE TOLD US THAT HIS CHINESE INFORMANT WAS LI EN-CH'U, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION, AND THAT LI DESCRIBED CHOU'S WORK AS "MEDIATING" POSTER ATTACKS AGAINST SENIOR OFFICIALS, I.E. DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT POSTER ATTACKS WERE JUSTIFIED AND WHETHER ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THE PERSONS BEING ACCUSED. IF LI EN-CH'U WAS CORRECT (AND WE HAVE NO PARTICULAR GROUNDS FOR DOUBTING HIM) CHOU COULD HAVE BEEN ACTIVE UNTIL APPROXIMATELY MID-JUNE OR EVEN LATER, AND FULFILLING A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE INDEED. "MEDIATION" ON THE POSTER ATTACKS RECALLS CHOU EN-LAI'S MEDIATION BETWEEN VARIOUS REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS DURING THE INTENSIVE INFIGHTING PHASE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. CHOU'S ILLNESS AND HOSPITALIZATION COULD HAVE BROUGHT THIS VITAL ASPECT OF THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO A GRINDING HALT. IT MIGHT WELL HAVE TO AWAIT HIS RECOVERY SINCE IT IS HARD TO SEE WHO ELSE IN THE LEADERSHIP, EXCEPT OF COURSE OF MAO HIMSELF, COULD CARRY OUT THIS ROLE.

4. CHOU MAY WELL BE RECOVERING AND PLANNING TO REASSUME SOME OF HIS FORMER DUTIES. HIS MEETING WITH THE VISITORS FROM NIGER ON JULY 20 SUGGESTED HE MAY BE IMPROVED AND CH'IAO KUAN'HUA HAS BEEN ASSURING EVERY WESTERN DIPLOMAT HE HAS SEEN THAT CHOU IS INDEED RECOVERING NICELY. CHOU'S WIFE TEN YING-CHAO IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE CAMBODIAN QUEEN DURING A RECENT CALL (AND DURING THE LATTER'S LAPSE INTO A COMA) THAT CHOU HAD SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK BUT WAS RECOVERING RAPIDLY. IF HE IS ABLE TO RETURN TO HIS INTERNAL POLITICAL ROLE, THE CAMPAIGN MAY THEN BE ABLE TO CONTINUE ON ITS EARLIER COURSE OF

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CRITICIZING LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL LEADERS.  
HOLDRIDGE

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## Message Attributes

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